Chapter. 42

Kyoto ③

March Lion

March comes in like a lion
Chica Umino

OW

OW

OW

AH, THIS HURTS

A BLACK BOG IN THE PIT OF MY STOMACH

PULSING

POUNDING AWAY

THIS IS COMP-LETELY,

OW ...

AH

TOTALLY

DAMNIT !!

clack

IT FEELS LIKE IT'S TELLING ME TO LIVE!

clack

2-8 ROOK, STILL TRYING TO END IT.

7-8 SILVER

6-7 SILVER. HE'S SAYING "LET'S END THIS"

clack

HOW LONG CAN HE STAY ON THE ATTACK?

HIS OWN KING'S IN DANGER

IF HE LETS UP HIS ATTACK, THIS WILL BE OVER IN MOMENTS.

THAT'S RECKLESS

HE'S GOING WITH THE PAWN ON 5-7?!

NO HE WONT.

NO... BUT CAN HE MAKE IT?!

AT THIS RATE, SHIMADA'S GONNA BE SHOT FULL OF HOLES!

SOYA WILL MOVE HIS ROOK TO 7-1.

BUT COME ON, HIS OPPONENT IS SOYA!

CLACK

FURTHER-MORE

THE GAME IS NOW OVER-WHELMINGLY IN SOYA'S FAVOR!!

WITH JUST HIS ROOK AND PAWN?!

HE DROVE HIM OFF?!

fwip

THIS MATCH IS OVER.

I'M OFF TO THE WAITING ROOM.

AND SOYA'S ASSAULT BEGAN.

SHIMADA'S ADVANCE WAS STOPPED

IT'S SNOWING

OH MY...

MY EYES ARE GETTING BLINDED BY THIS DAZZLING DARKNESS.

IT'S UNRELENTING! I'M BEING BURIED.

NO MATTER HOW I STRUGGLE,

SO BEAUTIFUL, IT STEALS MY HEART AWAY

UM...

SILENT AND OVERWHELMING...

WAIT!

PLEASE WAIT!

WAIT!

EXCUSE ME?

EVEN AN AMATEUR CAN SEE HOW THIS IS GOING TO END,

AND HIS OPPONENT IS SOYA!

HE'S NOT SUDDENLY MAKING A COMEBACK HERE.

IT ISN'T OVER YET.

BUT IT'S NOT OVER!

SHIMADA STILL HAS USABLE PIECES LEFT!

YES HE IS, SHIMADA'S DONE.

THIS WAS AN "OVER-WHELMING DIFFERENCE" FROM THE BEGINNING.

4 STRAIGHT LOSS. HE DIDN'T HAVE THE STRENGTH FOR THIS.

LOOK, I KNOW YOU'RE IN SHIMADA'S STUDY GROUP.

BUT THE VALUE OF ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIM IS PLUMMETING.

I KNOW YOU DON'T WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR MENTOR IS LOSING BADLY.

SO SHUT YOUR TRAP.

WELL,

YEAH

I'M SURE SHIMADA DID HIS BEST.

BUT YOU KNOW,

WITH AN OPPONENT LIKE THAT...

Whisper

mutter

AH, THAT'S REALLY TOO BAD.

NOT ONE WIN...

WOULD HAVE BEEN NICE IF IT HAD BEEN CLOSER.

THERE WEREN'T ANY REALLY GOOD PARTS.

THAT'S NOT WHAT'S GOING ON.

NO...!

THAT'S SOYA FOR YOU.

THERE'S REALLY NO HELPING IT, GIVEN HIS OPPONENT

4TH ROUND SHUT OUT...

WELL THAT'S WHAT WE ALL EXPECTED

YAMAGATA'S WAY TO FAR AWAY.

SHIMADA'S PIECES WHERE THEY ARE...

AS EXPECTED...

WITH THE BOARD THIS WAY, I DON'T THINK HE'S LOST YET.

THERE'S GOT TO BE SOMETHING...

SOMETHING I...

SOMETHING THAT I CAN...

SHIMADA

SHIMADA

SHIMADA

SHIMADA!!

FUJIMOTO GIRYU!

SHIMADA

NO

8-DAN SHIMADA, GAVE UP.

THE DIFFERENCE IS MUCH TOO GREAT.

LIKE I SAID BEFORE.

pat pat pat pat

SLAM

I DIDN'T NOTICE THAT...

WITH JUST THAT ONE MOVE

HOLD ON...

SOYA'S KING... ISN'T THIS CHECKMATE?

THIS DARKNESS DOESN'T JUST LOOP AROUND ME.

WAIT, HOLD ON

THAT MEANS

THAT BISHOP ON 7-9

THE KNIGHT ON 2-4 ISN'T THERE ANY-MORE?

ISN'T THIS AN UPSET?

IT'S LIKE THE WORLD

TOOK ON A WHOLE DIFFERENT SHAPE

YOU MADE ME OVERCONFIDENT.

IN JUST THAT ONE MOVE

A HOPE THAT I SHOULD HAVE SEEN CAME CRASHING THROUGH.

.....

IT WAS BEAUTIFUL TOO...

AND THUS THE SHISHIOU TOURNAMENT CAME TO A CLOSE, WITH SHIMADA SUFFERING FOUR CONSECUTIVE DEFEATS...

SHIMADA

WOULD YOU LIKE WATER OR SOMETHING LIGHT TO E...

THAT NIGHT, SHIMADA AND I RETURNED TO TOKYO

AND

THAT'S RIGHT

I KNEW THE HARD ROAD HE WALKED TO GET HERE.

LOOKING AT HIS EXHAUSTED FACE,

——I KNEW FROM THE BEGINNING

AS ONES WHO FACE DOWN STORMS

WANDERING WITHOUT END.

OURS IS A WORLD OF PEOPLE WHO STAND UP AND KEEP GOING.

NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU FALL, YOU PICK UP THE SCATTERED PIECES OF YOURSELF AND KEEP GOING

THIS WAS

WHY DID YOU DO IT?!

I'LL NEVER ASK HIM

SO THAT'S WHY WITH AN EXHAUSTED FACE LIKE THAT ONE.

JUST ONE ESPECIALLY BAD STORM.

THE ANSWER IS WITHIN THAT STORM

I CAN ONLY POSE THAT QUESTION TO MYSELF.

Chapter 72 END

March comes in like a lion

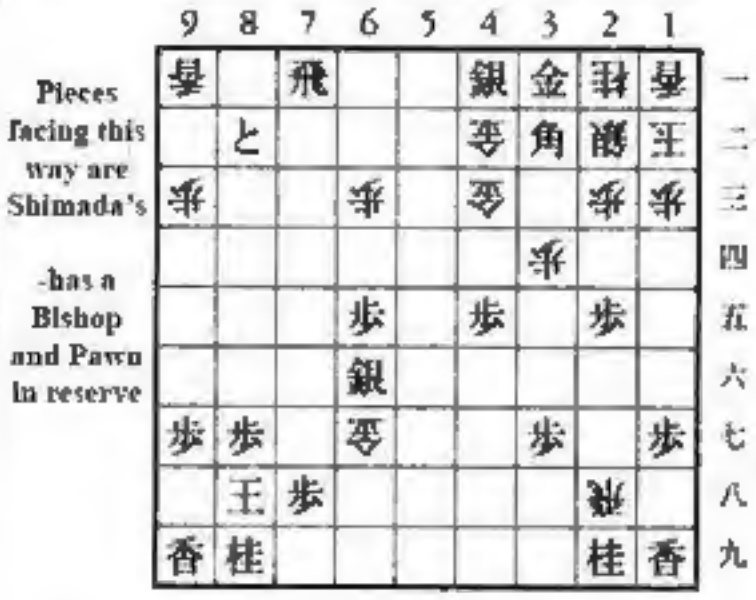
Chica Umino

SENZAKI MANABU'S LION SHOGI COLLUMN

By Senzaki Manabu

4

"You made me overconfident!" The one move that shook the room.


9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九
Pieces facing this way are Shimada's
-has a Bishop and Pawn in reserve
Pieces facing this way are Soya's
-has a Silver, Knight, and 3 Pawns in reserve

The decisive fourth round of the Shishiou tournament, with 8-dan Shimada vs Grand Master Soya. In one spectacular move of his bishop the entire game turned on its head. Soya delivers that cool line, "You made me overconfident." I'd like to say that just once in a cool tone like that, but even now if I try saying it, my voice breaks.

Now, the board above is the match at the time of the move. Though Shimada gave up, he had the potential of making the spectacular move of moving his bishop to 7-9. For those out there wondering, "What makes moving his bishop there so significant," I've prepared an explanation. First, when we talk about coordinates, the 7 refers to the 7th column from the right for the defending player. The 9 is the 9th row from the top. Looking at this board, the choice to move the bishop seems obvious, or at least it should to the one playing in Shimada's seat. That player should only be thinking about using this move to win. Understanding the meaning here is difficult so please bear with me here. First things first: Shimada has just one move left to make, next turn Soya will move his bishop to 2-1 and Shimada will lose. He has two options:

A: Take Soya's Gold on 3-1 with his Silver, or
B: Take Soya's Bishop on 3-2 with his Gold.

Each of these moves has problems, in Scenario A, the Knight on 2-4 is positioned in anticipation of that move. And with Scenario B, Soya will use same Silver and the game will be done shortly after. By foregoing A and B, and moving his bishop to 7-9 the whole complexion of the game changes. Soya now has two choices. C: Take the Bishop with his King, or D: have his king flee to 9-8. In case C, Shimada follows up by moving his Rook to 6-8, Soya will have to move his king to 8-8, and then he's in the same pinch as Shimada was in Scenario B. In this case, in retaliation to his silver, Shimada will go to 7-8 with his gold, Soya will attempt to use his rook, but Shimada's 7-9 bishop is there to prevent that, and victory is a few moves away. And regarding strategy D, now Soya is stuck in his own Scenario A, when Shimada moves his Silver to 3-1. his Knight on 2-4 may have helped, but with Shimada's Bishop 2-4 is no longer safe. It'll get taken. The game is all but won.

...Did that all make sense? Well, this is just one moment in a game of high level shogi.